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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News

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This service distributes news and information to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further dissemination of this email is encouraged.

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Headline: Navy standardizes women's health examinations

By Earl W. Hicks, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--Women in today's Navy and Marine Corps have vital roles ashore and aboard ships at sea. The challenge to Navy Medicine is to respond to these expanded roles of women by addressing their health issues.

The latest effort toward that goal is described in Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) Notice 6320 "Annual Health Maintenance Examination for Women." The notice, which can be found on the BUMED home page at address:

<http://nmimc-web1.med.navy.mil/bumed/> under "BUMED instructions," is a standardized guideline for women's minimum health examination procedures.

Previously, women's health examination requirements could be found in various memorandums and instructions. Not everyone knew how to find the information, therefore inconsistency in women's health care was always a possibility. Now with everything in one place, it is easier for the health care provider to see what is expected during the yearly health maintenance examination.

According to LCDR Linnea Axman, BUMED assistant for women's health issues, "The new notice ensures the same prescribed standard of care to all Navy and Marine Corps active duty women. The notice will contribute to thorough yearly health examinations for women and ultimately contribute to their overall operational readiness."

The required annual health examination for active duty

female Sailors and Marines includes the Papanicolaou (PAP) smear, pelvic exam, breast exam and blood pressure measurement.

The notice homes in on other women's health issues such as mammography, family planning and contraceptive counseling, and preventing sexually transmitted diseases. It also includes health promotion counseling such as diet, exercise and injury prevention.

"I don't believe anyone will argue that a healthy mind and body are not vital to successful mission accomplishment at sea or on shore," said Axman. "The thorough examination described in BUMED Notice 6320 will detect problems early, and the health promotion and disease prevention information will empower Navy and Marine Corps women to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles."

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Headline: Corpsmen take health care up close and personal to Marine recruits

By LT Richard G. Martin, MSC, Naval Hospital, Beaufort

BEAUFORT, S.C.--The Branch Medical Clinic, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island is testing a new program that will ensure timely health care for recruits and reduce time they spend away from training.

Called the "Company Corpsman Pilot Program," it not only ensures a continuous medical presence with the recruits, the test also provides an opportunity for junior corpsmen to gain valuable sickcall experience. Later, they will apply that experience in the Fleet or with Marine Corps units.

"We are taking a structure that is already in place in the Fleet Marine Force and putting it at the recruit training level," said CDR K.J. Young, NC, director for operational medicine at Naval Hospital, Beaufort.

Hospital corpsmen are trained especially for this program and then placed in a recruit company. This is a significant change from when corpsmen served at each of the four recruit training battalions. At the new company-level of support, corpsmen act as sickcall screeners, evaluating recruits with medical complaints, treating minor conditions at the battalion aid station and referring more serious cases to higher levels of medical care. They coordinate their findings and recommendations with the physician assistant assigned to the battalion aid station.

Lieutenant F.K. Schmidt, MSC, physician assistant involved in the pilot program with the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, said one of the immediate benefits has been to dramatically reduce the time it takes for sickcall from 3-1/2 hours to about 1-1/2 hours.

Hospital Corpsman First Class James Pisarz, an independent duty corpsman with the 1st Battalion Aid Station, said that the company-level involvement has improved their ability to support both the recruits and

battalion staff members.

"We become familiar with the individual recruits and their strengths and weaknesses," he said. "We even see the recruit training battalion staff members, so they spend less time away from the recruits. It's a good feeling to know that you're making a positive difference."

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Headline: The Virtual Naval Hospital is getting bigger and better  
From Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--In today's world of super digital information resources, the Virtual Naval Hospital (VNH) provides megabytes of medical information. Its electronic corridors contain references that help health care providers. It also is a source of health and wellness information for Sailors and Marines and their families.

VNH has evolved to include not only information on common every day health issues but selected high interest and high risk problems, such as women's health and mental health issues. Links to other medical homepages have also been added.

For those lacking Internet access, CD-ROM versions of the VNH web site will soon be available on a limited basis. The VNH also plans to obtain licenses for many more medical handbooks to add to both the web site and CD-ROM.

"This web site targets primary care providers such as GMOs (general medical officers) and IDCs (independent duty corpsmen) at the deckplates. Sailors and Marines at sea or on shore now have direct access to easy-to-understand medical information," said CDR Richard S. Bakalar, MC, medical sponsor for the VNH.

Since the VNH went online last year it has been expanding and is still under construction. According to Bakalar, Navy Medicine's digital health sciences library has grown in scope, quality and quantity.

Along with that growth, use of the web site has also increased. In March 1997 the size of the VNH was one megabyte and it was accessed 1,029 times on the Internet. As of April 1998, it is 30 megabytes and was accessed 74,000 times.

Although the web site targets Navy Medicine providers and customers, the user breakdown is 34 percent U.S. military, 58 percent U.S. civilian and eight percent outside of the United States.

The address for the VNH Homepage address is [www.vnh.org](http://www.vnh.org). The Virtual Hospital Tour is located in the "Welcome" section.

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Headline: Voice recognition technology eases hospital's paperwork load  
By Bill Doughty, U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka

YOKOSUKA, Japan--Using voice recognition technology in their laboratories, pathologists at U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka can now produce specimen investigation reports without the usual mountain of paperwork.

As recently as a year ago, a surgeon would send the pathologist a specimen accompanied by a paper report. The pathologist would then examine the specimen and dictate results into a tape recorder. The tape would be transcribed and sent back with more paper. As corrections and changes were made, the paperwork mill would continue to grind. Meanwhile, patients and providers waited for results.

Today, voice recognition technology almost completely replaces paperwork generated by the previous method. Now, the pathologist dictates into the computer, which types what he speaks. The information is then edited electronically and shared with other computers. The technique improves information turn around time and saves money. The only paper work generated is the final report.

"Voice recognition programs will become an important part of the electronic medical record," said LCDR Ron Linfesty, MC, head of the hospital's pathology laboratory. "Use of such a program in the lab is the first step in this transition."

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Headline: Pearl Harbor corpsman gets a kick out being fit  
From All Hands Magazine

WASHINGTON--Hospital Corpsman First Class Elizabeth Evans is an example of how dedication and training can pay off. A twelve-year veteran of Tae-Kwon-Do, she has won 31 medals in the sport since she began competing in 1992. She recently won the Hawaii Featherweight Tae-Kwon-Do Championship, and she is heading for the Olympic trials this year and a chance to make the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

The Seattle native has a lightning swift kick and a work ethic that is legendary among her peers. "If you don't practice, you don't win," she said. "My skills may be off, but my conditioning has to be top notch."

After narrowly missing an Olympic berth in 1992, she is more determined than ever to bring home the gold in 2000. "When it comes to the Olympic trials, I will have wild cards in two divisions. So, depending on which division is looking good for me, that's the division I can go with."

Evans, who works in the Administrative Services Department at Naval Medical Clinic, Pearl Harbor, trains six hours a day, six days a week.

"You have to be serious about your training," she said. "You have to want [a win] so bad you can taste it."

For now, Evans' training schedule will prepare her for the U.S. National Tae-Kwon-Do Championships. If that goes well, Evans will represent the United States at the 1998 Goodwill Games in New York City this July. A victory there

could secure Evans a spot on the 2000 Olympic team.

She joins other Navy athletes in this month's All Hands, a 50-page guide to maintaining good health through exercise and diet.

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Headline: TRICARE question and answer

Question: What is the extended service for the well-child benefit?

Answer: In an expansion of TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra health benefits, eligible children who haven't reached the age of six may now receive well-child care from authorized civilian providers of care. Well-child care was previously limited to children up to the age of two.

The extended benefit, effective as of October 6, 1997, includes routine newborn care, health supervision examinations, routine immunizations, periodic health screening, and developmental assessment in accordance with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.

Well-child care is covered for children from birth to age six when services are provided by the attending pediatrician, family physician, certified nurse practitioner, or certified physician assistant.

For children whose health screening and immunizations aren't up-to-date, TRICARE will cost-share visits and immunizations up to midnight of the day before the child turns six years old.

For more information about the well-child program, contact your TRICARE service provider or your military treatment facility.

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Headline: Healthwatch: exercise, diet, sleep contribute to healthy life

By LCDR Mike Hall, MC, Naval Hospital, Pensacola

PENSACOLA, Fla.--Prevention is hot stuff these days in the health care business. I think sometimes that for all its much vaunted technology, for its 'Star Wars'-like special effects and million dollar operations, medicine's contributions to good health can still be reduced to three simple guidelines: regular exercise, proper diet and adequate sleep.

I have been a strong proponent of the benefits of regular exercise. Hardly a week goes by that the media does not report a new study finding additional benefits of exercise. In just the last six months, the medical journals have carried articles linking regular exercise to a reduced incidence of heart disease, stroke, colon and breast cancer among other maladies.

To maximize the benefits of a successful exercise program, one must eat properly. This includes not only

consuming the proper foods, but also showing moderation in diet choices. It means choosing vegetable fats over animal fats and eating five fruits and vegetables every day.

However, every once in a while it is okay to eat anything you want and not worry about it. Let good judgment and common sense prevail and don't obsess over your diet. I call this the "90 and 10 Diet." Ninety percent of the time choose your diet carefully, and 10 percent of the time eat anything you want and don't worry!

Getting adequate sleep is a compliment to exercise and diet for good health. Although everyone's need for sleep is different, generally speaking we stay up too late or get up too early. Several years ago, I took a long camping trip out West with some others. After several days, our rhythms had conformed to the world around us: we were in bed soon after dark and up near dawn. Try to find some rhythm in your own lives.

After addressing concerns about exercise, diet and rest, one should also carefully consider the sun. Over-exposure to the sun can damage the skin and predispose one to skin cancer.

Remember that high heat and humidity can cause severe health problems, particularly in those with heart or lung ailments. Avoid training outside during the hottest times of the day (10 a.m.-2 p.m.). Wearing a hat and maintaining good fluid intake can reduce the chance of heat stroke or other heat-related injury. Also, take care of your eyes by wearing sunglasses to block harmful ultra violet rays.

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Comments about and ideas for MEDNEWS are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, Earl Hicks, at email: mednews@us.med.navy.mil; Telephone 202/762-3223, (DSN) 762-3223, or fax 202/762-3224.

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